

THE MERCCK INDEX

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
CHEMICALS, DRUGS, AND BIOLOGICALS

TWELFTH EDITION

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

With the Twelfth Edition, The Merck Index marks the beginning of its second century of publication. A comparison of this one-volume, 2600-page, multidisciplinary encyclopedia with the thin catalog of Merck products that was published in 1889, underscores the vast changes that have occurred in this publication over twelve editions, and in the realm of scientific information. Although the text continues to be designed primarily to serve the needs of chemists, biochemists, pharmacists, and those in allied professions, it contains information of interest to a broad spectrum of scientists and others in a large number of disciplines. The material is assembled with today's quick reference needs in mind, but the commitment to enhanced scientific communication and to excellence in scientific scholarship remains paramount.

This edition contains a diverse collection of over 10,000 monographs of which more than 4,000 are devoted to a wide variety of drugs and pharmaceuticals, over 2,000 describe common organic chemicals and laboratory reagents, and another 2,000 cover naturally occurring substances and plants. An additional 1,000 monographs focus on the elements and on inorganic chemicals, almost 1,000 pertain to compounds of agricultural significance, and several hundred describe endogenous substances and biological agents.

A number of changes have been made since the Eleventh Edition was published in 1989. The monograph section has been extensively revised. The chemical structures have been redrawn employing current conventions for chemical depictions. Nomenclature has been reviewed and stereochemical descriptors have been added, where pertinent. In response to requests from our readership, the section on Organic Name Reactions, which last appeared in 1983 in the Tenth Edition, has been updated and reintroduced. The compilation of Chemical Abstracts Service Registry Numbers has been significantly expanded. Several new tables have been added including a glossary emphasizing some of the newer terminology employed in the fields of molecular biology and immunology.

In recognition of the growing utilization of electronic versions of traditional reference works, THE MERCK INDEX ONLINE is made available through major online database vendors. A CD-ROM version of the Twelfth Edition, which is both text and structure searchable, will also be published in 1996.

Compared with their counterparts of earlier eras, scientists of the 1990s have unparalleled access to information from a multitude of sources. In this environment, it is especially gratifying that so many readers inform us that they refer to The Merck Index on a daily basis. We hope that this edition, published by Merck & Co., Inc., as a service to the scientific community, will continue the tradition and prove to be an indispensable reference to all who consult it.

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